The Government has advised the State Governments to augment the numbers of Community Health Centres/Hospitals by upgrading 25% of their Primary Health Centres, and further that care should be exercised to select those PHCs and CHSs for upgrading, which do not have referral facilities within reasonable distance.

(d) and (e) Under the World Bank funded Reproductive and Child Health Programme, an amount of Rs. 4.07 crores has been released since 1997 to the State of Meghalaya for strengthening of Primary Health care infrastructure. Meghalaya has reported an expenditure of Rs. 1.89 crores since 1997.

Decline in birth rate of girl child

†22. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that birth rate of girl child is decreasing continuously;

(b) if so, whether Government have considered the reasons of decline in the birth rate;

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the measures being taken to increase the birth rate of girl child?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) Yes Sir, the provisional figures of Census 2001 reveal that the sex ratio in the 0-6 age group has declined from 945 in 1991 to 927 in 2001.

(b) to (d) Some of the important reasons for decline in the sex ratio are:—

- Neglect of the girl child resulting in their higher mortality at younger ages;
- High maternal mortality;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

- Female infanticide;

- Male bias in enumeration of population;

- Female foeticide.

There may be many socio-economic reasons for this, the foremost among them being the practice of dowry and son-preference in the family.

The Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994 (PNDT Act) which bans disclosure of sex of foetus is operational since 1st Jan. 1996 in all States and UTs except J&K.

The implementation of the Act rests largely with the States/Union Territories. Appropriate Authorities have been appointed in all States/UTs. Advisory Committee(s) to aid and advise the Appropriate Authorities have been appointed in all States/UTs.

In addition to publicity through print and electronic media at the national level, the States/UTs have been advised to mount an effective awareness compaign to make the public and service providers aware of the provision of the Act. The States/UTs have also been advised to provide protection to social activists and Non-Governmental Organisations giving information or filing complaints of violation of provisions of the Act. After the Census 2001 figures was available, letters have been addressed to the Chief Ministers of all States/UTs to give focussed attention to the issue of adverse sex ratio. Chief Secretaries of all the States/UTs have also been addressed recently for following up on implementation of various provisions of the PNDT Act.